

Idaho

Students with Disabilities

Graduation Decision Guidance

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## Acknowledgments

The development of *Idaho Students with Disabilities Graduation Decision Guidance* has been a collaborative effort. Beginning in December 2003, task force members have taken time to study laws and rules; draft, review and revise; and make thoughtful recommendations and decisions in the development of this document.

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## **Students with Disabilities Graduation Decision Guidance**

All students can learn, including all students with disabilities. High expectation of learning for all students is essential for the success of any student's post school outcomes, whether work or education. Participation in statewide assessments is crucial in determining success and demonstrating equal opportunity and access to education. Statewide assessments 1) measure how schools are including students with disabilities in standards based reform activities, 2) monitor the degree to which instructional strategies are assisting all students' achievement, and 3) identify curriculum areas that need improvement for specific groups of students.

However, denying a student a high school diploma based on a single assessment can have a potentially damaging lifelong impact. Several studies have found that receipt of a high school diploma is a better predictor of a student's future employment and salary than performance on a basic skill test. Statistics have also shown that the unemployment rate of men and women without a high school diploma is at least twice the rate of those with a diploma.

It should be noted that the student's transcript serves as the official record of individual accomplishments, achievements and courses completed. It is a much better indicator of student capabilities than a diploma alone.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 both require the participation of students with disabilities in all statewide assessments. Both acts also require that states use the graduation rate for all students, including students with disabilities, as an indicator in measuring district and state success in educating all students. However, neither of the acts requires that the statewide assessment be used for promotion or as a condition of graduation. In fact, IDEA specifically states that when a district is considering a change of placement which includes discontinuation of services because of graduation, the district must "draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior." The district must also "ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered (§ 300.535 (a) (1-2))."

State board rule (IDAPA 08.02.03.105.03) requires that all students must achieve proficient or advanced scores on the High School Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in order to graduate. If a student does not attain at least a proficient score prior to graduation, then the student may *appeal* to the local school board and, at the board's discretion, may be given an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in the achievement standards through some other *locally established mechanism*. **With that, all students with disabilities will take each part of the High School ISAT or, if eligible, the Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA). In addition, each student receiving special education services will include as part of his/her IEP a statement of how the student will**

**demonstrate proficiency in the Idaho Achievement Standards as a condition of graduation, if it is different than meeting proficiency on the High School ISAT.**

The purpose of this document is to provide districts; especially IEP teams, with guidance on addressing these requirements for students with disabilities. IEP teams should reference this document in the development of individualized graduation plans for students receiving special education services.

## **Section 1. Participation in Statewide Assessments**

### **A. Participation**

All students with disabilities will participate in the High School ISAT and other statewide assessments. Students can participate in statewide assessments in four ways. The IEP team can determine that:

1. The student will take the assessment in the same manner as all other students;
2. The student will take the assessment with accommodations;
3. The student will take the assessment with adaptations; or
4. The student is eligible to take the Idaho Alternate Assessment.

### **B. Accommodations**

Accommodations are defined as changes in the testing format or procedures that enable students with disabilities to participate in a way that allows them to demonstrate their abilities rather than disabilities. Accommodations do not invalidate the assessment results. Accommodations can be made in the setting, presentation, timing, response or scheduling. IEP teams should use only those accommodations:

1. routinely provided during classroom instruction;
2. needed by the student to demonstrate knowledge and skills;
3. listed in the Idaho Special Education Manual 2001, Appendix 4D, Section 6, pages A-105 to A-112 (revised September 2002); and
4. approved by the test publisher.

Students must be provided an opportunity to practice and learn to use each selected accommodation prior to its use during assessment. Selected accommodations should not be provided for the first time on the day of the assessment.

### **C. Adaptations**

Adaptations used in an assessment are fundamental changes that enable a student with a disability to participate in assessments. Adaptations invalidate or produce results that are not comparable, even though they may be used regularly in class work or in classroom testing. Types of adaptations include reading the reading test to a student, use of a spell checker on a spelling test, out-of-levels assessments, or use of a calculator when math calculation is being assessed. Use of adaptations on statewide assessments should be very

limited and used with caution. See Appendix 4D in the Idaho Special Education Manual for more information.

#### **D. Idaho Alternate Assessment**

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are using the Alternate Achievement Standards as their general education curriculum can participate in the Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA). The eligibility criteria for participation in the IAA are:

1. The student's demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavior prevent completion of the general academic curriculum even with program modifications;
2. The student's course of study is primarily functional-skill and living-skill oriented (use of alternate state standards, not measured by the state assessment); and
3. The student is unable to acquire, maintain or generalize skills and demonstrate performance of those skills without intensive, frequent, individualized instruction.

A student with a proficient or advanced score on the Idaho Alternate Assessment can also meet the assessment requirement for graduation with a regular high school diploma. Other graduation requirements, such as required course work, must be addressed on the graduation plan.

#### **E. IEP Team Decisions**

Making decisions about how individual students participate in assessment is very important and challenging. The outcomes of those decisions must be considered carefully for each individual student. All accommodations/adaptations should be based on the instructional strategies that are used for each student and outlined on the student's IEP. IEP teams should consider the answers to the following questions when determining whether or not to use accommodations/adaptations for instruction and assessment:

1. What helps the student learn or perform better?
2. What has the student or parent told you regarding performance?
3. What gets in the way of the student demonstrating skills or knowledge?
4. What has the student been taught to use?
5. What is the purpose of the assessment and what skills are being measured?

IEP teams must know the state assessment accommodation policies found in the Test Coordinators Guide at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instruct/counseling> or in the Idaho Special Education Manual, Appendix 4D at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd>. Students should routinely use the IEP accommodations/adaptations on classroom tests or practice tests. A member of the IEP team must ensure that the assessment administrator or proctor knows about and allows the accommodations/adaptations that each student needs to use during the assessment.

## Section 2: Locally Established Mechanisms

If a student with a disability does not meet the proficiency score on the High School ISAT, the IE team can determine other methods that the student can use to demonstrate proficiency on the Idaho Achievement Standards through *a locally established mechanism* (IDAPA 08.02.03.105.03). This may include one or more evaluation methods. The following chart describes different mechanisms or methods that could be used to demonstrate student proficiency on the standards:

**Evaluation Methods to Demonstrate Proficiency**

Type	Description	Scoring	Proficiency
End of Course (with or without accommodations)	The purpose is to assess the knowledge and understanding of a student upon the completion of a course of study. Each test is designed to measure the Idaho State Achievement Standards addressed in the course. The results of the test are used to assess the student's mastery of the achievement standards.	Traditional	C or higher
Portfolio	An authentic assessment that uses a purposefully selected subset of student work to demonstrate a student's knowledge and skills. This could include end of course assessments that have been adapted for the individual student.	Rubric	Proficient or Advanced score
Another State's Assessment	An exit exam from another state that requires a standards-based exam for graduation. The state exit exams must be approved by the State Board of Education, measure skills at the tenth grade level or above, and be in comparable subject areas to the ISAT.	Will vary by state	Proficient or Advanced score
Performance (with or without accommodations)	Assessments that require a student to create an answer or product that demonstrates knowledge and skills taught in the curriculum and is aligned to Idaho Achievement Standards	Scoring Rubric	Proficient or Advanced score
Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)	Assessment for students with disabilities who will not participate in part or all of the ISAT, DMA or DWA. Items reflect the Alternate Achievement Standards which are aligned with Idaho Achievement Standards	Standardized Rating Scale	Established by the IEP team
Idaho State Assessments	This could include the DMA or DWA	Scoring rubrics	3 (proficient) or higher

### Section 3: Individualized Graduation Plan

Beginning with the development of the IEP during the student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, the IEP team must address the student's course of study, as well as consider the district graduation requirements for each student. Every student eligible for special education services must have an Individualized Graduation Plan. The plan must include at least one evaluation measure in the core academic area(s). If the student is not demonstrating proficiency on the ISAT and it appears that he/she may not be able to demonstrate proficiency on the High School ISAT, another agreed upon evaluation mechanism must be identified. The plan may also use other indicators to support the identified method of evaluation when determining the graduation requirements for individual students receiving special education services. The following rubric will be used by the IEP team in addressing the indicators on the individualized graduation plan:

**Graduation Plan Rubric**

Indicator	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
<b>Other Evaluation Methods</b>	<b>IEP teams must select at least one evaluation method in each academic area addressed on the graduation plan.</b>			
<b>Individual ISAT growth rate (Must include ISAT history if selected)</b>	Based on ISAT history, student exceeds individual growth rate set by IEP team	Based on ISAT history, student meets individual growth rate set by IEP team	Based on ISAT history, student is below individual growth rate set by IEP team	Based on ISAT history, student shows no growth toward individual growth rate set by IEP team
<b>Classroom Participation (identified tasks)</b>	Student completes 90% of individually appropriate classroom activities/ assignments	Student completes 80% of individually appropriate classroom activities/ assignments	Student completes 75% of individually appropriate classroom activities/ assignments	Student completes <75% of individually appropriate classroom activities/ assignments
<b>Cum. GPA</b>	3.0	2.5	2.0	<2.0
<b>Grades for Individually-targeted Courses</b>	≥ B	C	D	F
<b>Meeting IEP goals/objectives</b>	Measurement of progress on student IEP goals and objectives indicates they are completed	Measurement of progress on student IEP goals and objectives indicates they are completed	Measurement of progress on student IEP goals and objectives indicates they are not completed.	Measurement of progress on student IEP goals and objectives indicates they are not completed
<b>Attendance</b>	Use local district attendance policy			

The IEP team must review each individualized graduation plan annually until the student meets the outlined requirements for graduation. If changes are made to the plan, the IEP team must justify on the annual review form why each change is necessary. Two different graduation forms have been developed. The first form is used during the initial development of the Individualized Graduation Plan at 8<sup>th</sup> grade or when a student enrolls in the district. The second form is to be used by the teams annually when reviewing and, if appropriate, revising the graduation plan. A secondary school principal must be part of the graduation plan development to ensure that the proposed plan and any changes to the plan will meet the district requirements for graduation.

Every student eligible for special education services must have an Individualized Graduation Plan. The district will use the regular high school diploma for students who are graduating with Individualized Graduation Plans. Students may meet the regular graduation requirements, may meet comparable graduation requirements, or may complete alternate requirements developed through the IEP process.

1. **Regular graduation requirements:** The student meets regular graduation requirements with no accommodations or adaptations. This includes receiving a proficient score in all areas of the High School ISAT.
2. **Comparable graduation requirements:** The student meets graduation requirements that are comparable to those established in district and state policy. Comparable graduation requirements may include accommodation requirements to meet a student's needs, but they are as rigorous as the established regular graduation requirements. This includes receiving a proficient score in all areas of the High School ISAT with accommodations or meeting proficiency on one or more of the identified evaluation methods established on the graduation plan.
3. **Graduation criteria established by the IEP team:** The student meets the criteria established on his/her Individualized Graduation Plan that is part of the IEP. The IEP team specifically addresses completion of the student's secondary program by adapting the regular graduation requirements by:
  - a. Adapting the course content, course objectives, instructional strategies, grading, assessments; and/or
  - b. Identifying alternative methods for demonstrating competence.

When a student meets the regular or comparable graduation requirements for receipt of a regular high school diploma, the student's entitlement to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) ends. If a student is granted a high school diploma for completing requirements that are not comparable to regular graduation requirements, the student is entitled to receive FAPE through the semester in which he/she turns 21 years of age or completes requirements that are comparable to regular graduation requirements, whichever comes first.



**Individualized Graduation Plan  
(Included with the IEP)**

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Grade Developed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

In order to demonstrate proficiency on Idaho State Achievement Standards, the graduation requirements are:

**Evaluation Methods: (Check method(s) used. Must include at least one method in each core area)**

<b>Reading: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>
	ISAT (with or without accommodations)	
	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*	
	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)	
	End of Course Assessment	
	Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)	
	Another State's Assessment (list)	
	Performance Assessment (list)	
	Portfolio (describe)	
	Other: (describe)	
<b>Language: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>
	ISAT (with or without accommodations)	
	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*	
	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)	
	End of Course Assessment	
	Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)	
	Another State's Assessment (list)	
	Performance Assessment (list)	
	Portfolio (describe)	
	Other: (describe)	
<b>Math: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>
	ISAT (with or without accommodations)	
	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*	
	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)	
	End of Course Assessment	
	Direct Math Assessment (DMA)	
	Another State's Assessment (list)	
	Performance Assessment (list)	
	Portfolio (describe)	
	Other: (describe)	

**\*ISAT Growth Rate Chart: (Must use three consecutive Spring assessments to establish estimate RIT growth rate)**

**Math growth:**

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading growth:**

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Language Arts growth:**

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Supporting Graduation Indicators (Optional)**

(Use Graduation Plan Rubric when determining performance level.)

✓ if used	Indicator	Expected Performance Level
	<b>Classroom Participation</b>	
	<b>Cumulative GPA</b>	
	<b>Individually-targeted Course Grades (list each):</b>	
	<b>Meeting IEP Goals/Objectives</b>	
	<b>Attendance</b>	
	<b>Other: (describe)</b>	

**Four-Year Student Course of Study to meet graduation :**

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12

**Individualized Graduation Plan  
Annual Review  
(Included with the IEP)**

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Grade Developed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

In order to demonstrate proficiency on Idaho State Achievement Standards, the graduation requirements have been changed as follows:

**Evaluation Methods: (Check method(s) used. Must include at least one method in each core area)**

<b>Reading: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Annual Review Date</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT (with or without accommodations)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	End of Course Assessment			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Another State's Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Portfolio (describe)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (describe)			
<b>Language: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Annual Review Date</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT (with or without accommodations)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	End of Course Assessment			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Another State's Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Portfolio (describe)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (describe)			
<b>Math: Method</b>		<b>Expected Performance Level</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Annual Review Date</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT (with or without accommodations)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	ISAT Individual Growth Rate*			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	End of Course Assessment			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Math Assessment (DMA)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Another State's Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Assessment (list)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Portfolio (describe)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (describe)			

**Justification for changes:**

<b>Math growth:</b>	<b>Reading growth:</b>	<b>Language Arts growth:</b>
Year 1: _____	Year 1: _____	Year 1: _____
Year 2: _____	Year 2: _____	Year 2: _____
Year 3: _____	Year 3: _____	Year 3: _____

(Use Graduation Plan Rubric when determining performance level)

**Justification for changes:**

[illegible]

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## **Section 4: Appeal Process for Students Receiving Special Education Services**

Some students with disabilities may be able to meet all of the regular graduation requirements, including proficiency scores on the High School ISAT. Other students will need to demonstrate proficiency on statewide assessments or meet other graduation requirements in other ways. Regardless of how students demonstrate the high school graduation requirements, all students with disabilities must have Individualized Graduation Plans. The appeal process for students with disabilities will begin with the development of Individualized Graduation Plans that are part of the IEPs. Implementation of a consistent statewide individualized graduation plan in determining the graduation requirements for students with disabilities is critical for students, parents, teachers and administrators. The following process will be used by IEP teams in Idaho when considering the graduation requirements for students with disabilities:

1. The student must meet the state criteria for eligibility for special education and have a current IEP.
2. The student must participate in the High School ISAT or the IAA.
3. Beginning with the development of the IEP during the student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, the IEP team must address the student's course of study, as well as consider the district graduation requirements if it appears that the student is not on track to be able to meet the proficiency score on the ISAT without or with accommodations. This is calculated using the data history for each student—considering rate of growth on the ISAT, scores on other assessment like the DMA or DWA, or end of course assessments.
4. The IEP team must include all required members including the student, parent and secondary school administrator.
5. The IEP team must review the alternate plan annually and, if necessary, revise it.
6. Following the completion of the Spring High School ISAT administration, the high school administrator will appeal to the local school board for any student who has an IEP and will meet graduation requirements using the Individualized Graduation Plan.

In order to ensure the integrity of the system, an internal review team will be established to review the timeliness and completion of individualized graduation plans. The team must meet at least annually and document the proceedings. The team must include: school administrators, regular education teachers, special education teachers and school counselors/psychologists. Other personnel from the school or from other districts can be brought in to support the review process. In addition, the Bureau of Special Education will review alternate plans and the work of the internal review team through the monitoring process.

## References

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